

Second Judicial District Court loses eighty-six years of judicial experience

At the end of the end of 2020, the Second Judicial District Court will lost a combined eighty-six years of judicial experience when seven judges stepped down from the bench. This distinguished group of departing jurists is led by Judge John Romero who retired after serving 17 years on the Children's Court bench.

During his tenure on the bench, Judge Romero served as Presiding Judge of Children's Court as well as an officer of many national organizations that work to improve the juvenile justice system, including a term as president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.



Judge John Romero

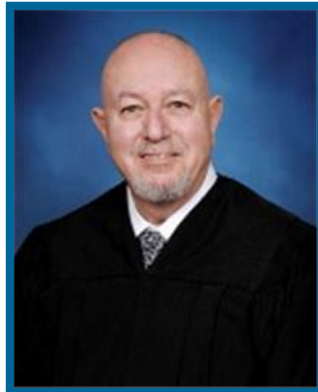
Judge Carl Butkus was the second-longest tenured jurist of the group, having served 15 years on the Civil Court bench. Judge Charles Brown, who at the time of his retirement, Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division, thirteen years on that bench.

The other departing judges are:

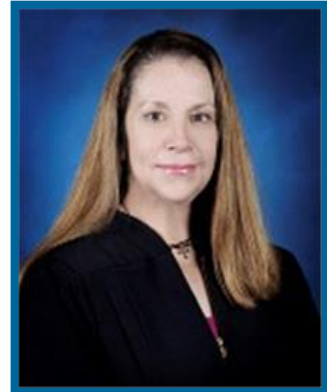
- ◆ Christina Argyres , who served eight years on the District Court's criminal bench and two years as a Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judge.
- ◆ Jaqueline Flores, who served eleven years in the Criminal Division.
- ◆ Daniel Gallegos, who served a year on the criminal bench, and also a year on the New Mexico Court of Appeals.
- ◆ Cristina Jaramillo, who served six years on the District Court Criminal bench following twelve years as a Metro Court judge. Judge Jaramillo has worked extensively with drug courts, starting as an attorney and continuing as a judge. She is a past president of New Mexico Association of Drug Court Professionals, and past chair of the New Mexico Supreme Court Drug Advisory Committee.



Judge Carl Butkus



Judge Charles Brown



Judge Cristina Jaramillo

In addition to the number of years of judicial experience represented, this changing of the guard means 24 percent of the judges presiding over cases in District Court next year will be new to their positions.

At this point, we only know who one of those new judges will be. Judge Courtney Weaks, formerly of Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court, was elected in November to fill a spot on the Criminal bench. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham will make appointments to fill the remaining vacancies.

"Thank you to my colleagues for your extraordinary leadership and for your distinguished public service over the years. Each of you have been a part of our SJDC family, and we have valued your tremendous service to the community. You have all served the judiciary with great honor, wisdom, diligence, and a strong commitment to the judiciary," said SJDC Chief Judge Stan Whitaker.